



One Awkward Encounter



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Chapter 1 by Fanwizard

“Lily, stop staring,” Olivia hisses. “It’s rude to stare. And don’t point!”

As usual, Mom had taken us shopping. While she was examining each shirt or pair of jeans, Olivia had unofficially made herself the boss of me, which also meant that she scolded me every single time I stared. I called it people watching.

“Hey, look!” I pointed at a teenager that looked awfully familiar. “Isn’t that Sarah?”

If Olivia doesn’t tell me to stop pointing at someone, then something is wrong. If Olivia falls silent, then something is wrong. If two red spots appear on Olivia’s cheeks, then something is really wrong. My sister never blushes.

Olivia ducked behind a rack of skinny jeans and dragged me with her. If Olivia touches me voluntarily, then something is definitely wrong, like the world’s about to end wrong.

“Get down!” Olivia hisses. (I swear she has to be a snake with all that hissing.)

“Why? It’s only Sarah?”

I had met Sarah plenty of times. No matter how hard I tried to, I couldn’t fathom the fact that Sarah, a girl who smiled and wore bright clothes, was friends with Olivia, who was stubborn, wore navy blue, black, and gray, and hardly smiled. At least, around me. Sarah always gave me hugs and knew who I was, beyond “Olivia’s little sister.”

Despite Olivia’s best attempts, I popped up like a Jack in the Box, and waved to Sarah. “Hey Sarah!” I shouted.

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Olivia was trying to slide in, but it was unsuccessful. Sarah rushed over with a hug, pulling me up in a hug faster than I could say ‘Penguin’.

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"Hey, Lily," Sarah said, holding me at arm's length. "How's your sister doing? Is she here?"

"Yeah," I easily spot Olivia, trying to scoot away from us. "Olivia, it's not working."

Olivia blushes red, and suddenly, Sarah stiffens from beside me when Olivia stands up, brushing off her black jeans.

"Olivia," Sarah said politely, but not warmly.

"Sarah," Olivia uses the exact same tone right back.

Instead of starting some random conversation, they just look at each other, then look down and around, pretending to be fascinated with the 40% off sign.

I was confused. Olivia and Sarah always seemed to have something to say, either something serious or something really sarcastic. But now, they seemed like strangers.

"Lily, come try this top," Mom called out. She held up a black and white striped t-shirt. I grabbed the top, and headed to the dressing room.

A few minutes after Mom deemed it acceptable and added it to the clothes she wanted to buy, I went back in search of Olivia and Sarah.

Except it wasn't Olivia and Sarah. It was just Olivia.

"Where's Sarah?" I asked.

Olivia shrugged, trying to look nonchalant. "She had to go."

"Why were you so quiet around her? And why were you trying to hide?"

She scowled. "None of your business."

But I sensed there was more to the story than 'None of your business'.

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